Council Regulation (EU) 2016/72 of 22 January 2016 fixing for 2016 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters, and amending Regulation (EU) 2015/104

COUNCIL REGULATION (EU) 2016/72

of 22 January 2016

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 43(3) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) Article 43(3) of the Treaty provides that the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, is to adopt measures on the fixing and allocation of fishing opportunities.
- (2) Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁾ requires that conservation measures be adopted taking into account available scientific, technical and economic advice, including, where relevant, reports drawn up by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) and other advisory bodies, as well as in the light of any advice received from Advisory Councils.
- (3) It is incumbent upon the Council to adopt measures on the fixing and allocation of fishing opportunities, including certain conditions functionally linked thereto, as appropriate. In accordance with Article 16(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, fishing opportunities should be fixed in accordance with the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy established in Article 2(2) of that Regulation. In accordance with Article 16(1) of that Regulation, fishing opportunities should be allocated to Member States in such a way as to ensure relative stability of fishing activities of each Member State for each fish stock or fishery.
- (4) The total allowable catch (TACs) should therefore be established, in line with Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, on the basis of available scientific advice, taking into account biological and socio-economic aspects whilst ensuring fair treatment between fishing sectors, as well as in the light of the opinions expressed during the consultation of stakeholders, in particular at the meetings of the Advisory Councils.
- (5) The landing obligation referred to in Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 is introduced on a fishery-by-fishery basis. In the region covered by this Regulation, when a fishery falls under the landing obligation, all species in that fishery subject to catch limits should be landed. From 1 January 2016, the landing obligation applies to

the species that define the fisheries. Article 16(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 provides that, when the landing obligation in respect of a fish stock is introduced, fishing opportunities are to be fixed taking into account the change from fixing fishing opportunities that reflect landings to fixing fishing opportunities that reflect catches. On the basis of the joint recommendations submitted by the Member States and in accordance with Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 the Commission adopted a number of delegated Regulations laying down specific discard plans applicable on a temporary basis for a maximum period of three years, in preparation for the full implementation of the landing obligation.

- (6) The fishing opportunities for stocks of species falling under the landing obligation from 1 January 2016 should compensate for former discards and be based on scientific information and advice. In order to ensure fair compensation for the fish that has been previously discarded and that will have to be landed from 1 January 2016, a top-up should be calculated according to the following methodology: the new landings figure should be calculated by subtracting from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) figure of total catches the amounts that will continue to be discarded during the operation of the landing obligation; subsequently a top-up applied to the TAC figure should be proportional to the change between the new calculated landings figure and the previous ICES landings figure.
- (7) According to scientific advice, sea bass (Dicentrarchus labrax) in the Celtic Sea, Channel, Irish Sea and southern North Sea (ICES divisions IVb, IVc and VIIa, VIId-VIIh) is in a perilous state and stock continues to decline. The conservation actions to prohibit fishing for sea bass in ICES divisions VIIb, VIIc, VIIj and VIIk should be maintained and should include ICES divisions VIIa and VIIg, with the exception of the waters within 12 nautical miles of the baseline under the sovereignty of the United Kingdom. Spawning aggregations of sea bass should be protected and no catches should be allowed in the entire distribution area of the stock for the first six months of the year. Due to incidental and unavoidable by-catches of sea bass by vessels using demersal trawls and seines, such by-catches should be limited to 1 % of the weight of the total catch of marine organisms on board. Further restrictions of catches are needed to protect sea bass outside the spawning periods, therefore monthly catch limits should apply in ICES divisions IVb and IVc, as well as VIId, VIIe, VIIf and VIIh, and in the UK territorial sea in ICES divisions VIIa and VIIg. Catches of recreational fishermen should be limited further.
- (8) For some years, certain TACs for stocks of elasmobranchs (skates, sharks, rays) have been set at 0, with a linked provision establishing an obligation to immediately release accidental catches. The reason for this specific treatment is that the conservation status of those stocks is poor and, because of their high survival rates, discards will not raise fishing mortality rates for them, but are deemed as beneficial for the conservation of these species. As of 1 January 2015, however, catches of those species in pelagic fisheries have to be landed, unless they are covered by any of the derogations from the landing obligation foreseen in Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013. Article 15(4)(a) of that Regulation allows such derogations for species in respect of which fishing is prohibited and which are identified as such in a Union legal act adopted

- in the area of the Common Fisheries Policy. Therefore, it is appropriate to prohibit the fishing of those species in the areas concerned.
- (9)Pursuant to Article 16(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, for stocks subject to specific multiannual plans the TACs should be established in accordance with the rules laid down in those plans. Consequently, the TACs for stocks of sole in the Western Channel, of plaice and sole in the North Sea, of cod in the Kattegat, to the west of Scotland, the Irish Sea, the North Sea, Skagerrak and the Eastern Channel and of bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean should be established in accordance with the rules laid down in Council Regulations (EC) No 509/2007⁽²⁾, (EC) No 676/2007⁽³⁾, (EC) No 1342/2008⁽⁴⁾ (the 'Cod Plan') and (EC) No 302/2009⁽⁵⁾. The objective for the Southern hake stock as set out in Council Regulation (EC) No 2166/2005⁽⁶⁾ is to rebuild the biomass of the stocks concerned to within safe biological limits, while staying in line with the scientific data. In accordance with scientific advice, in the absence of definitive data on a target spawning stock biomass and while taking into account changes in safe biological limits, it is appropriate, in order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy as defined in Regulation (EU) 1380/2013, to fix the TAC on the basis of maximum sustainable yield advice, as provided by ICES.
- (10) As a result of the recent benchmark exercise, as regards the stock of herring to the west of Scotland, ICES has provided advice for the combined herring stocks in Divisions VIa, VIIb and VIIc (West of Scotland, West of Ireland). The advice covers two separate TACs (for VIaS, VIIb and VIIc on the one hand, and for Vb, VIb and VIaN on the other). According to ICES, a rebuilding plan has to be developed for these stocks. Since, according to scientific advice, the management plan for the northern stock⁽⁷⁾ cannot be applied to the combined stocks, it is appropriate, in order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy as defined in Regulation (EU) 1380/2013, to fix the TACs on the basis of the maximum sustainable yield advice.
- (11) For stocks for which there is no sufficient or reliable data in order to provide size estimates, management measures and TAC levels should follow the precautionary approach to fisheries management as defined in Article 4(1)(8) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, while taking into account stock-specific factors, including, in particular, available information on stock trends and mixed fisheries considerations.
- (12) Council Regulation (EC) No 847/96⁽⁸⁾ introduced additional conditions for year-to-year management of TACs including, under Articles 3 and 4, flexibility provisions for precautionary and analytical TACs. Under Article 2 of that Regulation, when fixing the TACs, the Council is to decide to which stocks Articles 3 or 4 shall not apply, in particular on the basis of the biological status of the stocks. More recently, the year-to-year flexibility mechanism was introduced by Article 15(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 for all stocks that are subject to the landing obligation. Therefore, in order to avoid excessive flexibility that would undermine the principle of rational and responsible exploitation of living marine biological resources, hinder the achievement of the objectives of the CFP and deteriorate the biological status of the stocks, it should be established that Articles 3 and 4 of Regulation (EC) No 847/96 apply to analytical

- TACs only where the year-to-year flexibility provided for in Article 15(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 is not used.
- (13) Where a TAC relating to a stock is allocated to one Member State only, it is appropriate to empower that Member State in accordance with Article 2(1) of the Treaty to determine the level of such TAC. Provisions should be made to ensure that, when fixing that TAC level, the Member State concerned acts in a manner fully consistent with the principles and rules of the Common Fisheries Policy.
- (14) It is necessary to establish the fishing effort ceilings for 2016 in accordance with Article 5 of Regulation (EC) No 509/2007, Article 9 of Regulation (EC) No 676/2007, Articles 11 and 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1342/2008 and Articles 5 and 9 of Regulation (EC) No 302/2009, while taking into account Council Regulation (EC) No 754/2009⁽⁹⁾.
- (15) In order to guarantee full use of fishing opportunities, it is appropriate to allow for the implementation of a flexible arrangement between some of the TAC areas where the same biological stock is concerned.
- (16) In the light of the most recent scientific advice from ICES and in accordance with the international commitments in the context of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Convention (NEAFC), it is necessary to limit the fishing effort on certain deep-sea species.
- (17) For certain species, such as certain species of sharks, even a limited fishing activity could result in a serious risk to their conservation. Fishing opportunities for such species should therefore be fully restricted through a general prohibition on fishing those species.
- (18) At the 11th Conference of the Parties of the Convention of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, held in Quito from 3 to 9 November 2014, a number of species were added to the lists of protected species in Appendices I and II of the Convention, with effect from 8 February 2015. Therefore, it is appropriate to provide for the protection of those species with respect to Union fishing vessels fishing in all waters and non-Union fishing vessels fishing in Union waters.
- (19) The use of fishing opportunities available to Union fishing vessels set out in this Regulation is subject to Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009⁽¹⁰⁾, and in particular to Articles 33 and 34 of that Regulation, concerning the recording of catches and fishing effort and the notification of data on the exhaustion of fishing opportunities. It is therefore necessary to specify the codes to be used by Member States when sending data to the Commission relating to landings of stocks subject to this Regulation.
- (20) For certain TACs Member States should be allowed to grant additional allocations for vessels participating in trials on fully documented fisheries. The aim of those trials is to test a catch-quota system in fisheries that are not yet under the landing obligation set out in Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, i.e. a system where all catches should be landed and counted against quotas in order to avoid discards and the waste of otherwise usable fish resources they entail. Uncontrolled discards of fish are a threat to the long term sustainability of fish as a public good and thus to the Common Fisheries Policy objectives. By contrast, catch-quota systems inherently present the fishers with

an incentive to optimise the catch selectivity of their operations. For the purpose of monitoring compliance with the conditions to which the fully documented fisheries trials are subject, Member States should ensure detailed and accurate documentation of all fishing trips and adequate capacity and means, such as observers, closed-circuit television (CCTV) and others. In doing so, Member States should respect the principle of efficiency and proportionality. For the use of CCTV systems, the requirements of Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council should be complied with.

- (21) In order to ensure that trials of fully documented fisheries can effectively evaluate the potential of catch-quota systems to control the absolute fishing mortality of the stocks concerned, it is necessary for all fish caught in those trials, including those under minimum landing size, to be counted against the total allocation assigned to the participating vessel, and for fishing operations to cease when that total allocation has been fully utilised by that vessel. It is also appropriate to allow transfers of allocations between vessels participating in the fully documented fisheries trials and non-participating vessels provided that it can be demonstrated that discards by non-participating vessels do not increase.
- (22) It is appropriate, following advice from the ICES, to maintain a specific system to manage sandeel in Union waters of ICES divisions IIa and IIIa and ICES subarea IV. Given that the ICES scientific advice is expected to become available only in February 2016, it is appropriate to set the TAC and quotas for this stock provisionally at zero until such advice is released.
- In accordance with the procedure provided for in the agreements or protocols on fisheries relations with Norway⁽¹²⁾ and the Faroe Islands⁽¹³⁾ the Union has held consultations on fishing rights with those partners. In accordance with the procedure provided for in the agreement and protocol on fisheries relations with Greenland⁽¹⁴⁾, the Joint Committee has established the level of fishing opportunities available for the Union in Greenland waters in 2016. It is therefore necessary to include these fishing opportunities in this Regulation.
- (24) At its Annual Meeting in 2015, NEAFC adopted a conservation measure on the redfish stock in the Irminger Sea fixing for 2016 the TAC and quotas for the contracting parties, including the Union.
- At its Annual Meeting in 2015, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) adopted for the 2016-2018 period a decrease of the TAC and quotas for bigeye tuna and an extension of the TACs and quotas for blue and white marlins. Furthermore, it confirmed for 2016 TACs and quotas previously established for bluefin tuna, North-Atlantic swordfish, Southern-Atlantic swordfish, Southern-Atlantic Albacore and North- Atlantic Albacore. As it is already the case for the stock of bluefin tuna, it is appropriate that catches in recreational fisheries performed on all other ICCAT stocks included in Annex ID also be subject to the catch limits adopted by that organisation in order to guarantee that the Union does not exceed its quotas. All these measures should be implemented in the law of the Union.

- (26) At its 34th Annual Meeting in 2015, the Parties to the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) adopted catch limits for both target and by-catch species for 2015/2016 and 2016/2017. The uptake of such quota during 2015 should be considered when setting fishing opportunities for the year 2016.
- (27) At its Annual Meeting in 2015, the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) confirmed the conservation and management measures on capacity in place. The IOTC also adopted a measure on limitation of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs). As the activities of supply vessels and the use of FADs are an integral part of the fishing effort exerted by the purse seine fleet, the measure should be implemented in the law of the Union.
- (28) The Annual Meeting of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) will be held on 25-29 January 2016. It is appropriate that current measures in the SPRFMO Convention Area are provisionally maintained until such Annual Meeting is held. However, the stock of jack mackerel should not be targeted before a TAC is set as a result of that Annual Meeting.
- (29) At its 89th Annual Meeting in 2015, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) maintained its conservation measures for yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna and skipjack tuna. IATTC also maintained its resolution on the conservation of oceanic whitetip sharks. Those measures should continue to be implemented in the law of the Union.
- (30) At its Annual Meeting in 2015, the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO) adopted a conservation measure for TACs for Patagonian toothfish and deep-sea red crab, while the existing TACs for alfonsinos, orange roughy and pelagic armourhead remained in force. The currently applicable measures on allocation of fishing opportunities adopted by SEAFO should be implemented in the law of the Union.
- (31) At its 12th Annual Meeting, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) confirmed the conservation and management measures in place. Those measures should continue to be implemented in the law of the Union.
- (32) At its Annual Meeting in 2013, the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock resources in the central Bering Sea did not modify its measures regarding fishing opportunities. Those measures should be implemented in the law of the Union.
- (33) At its 37th Annual Meeting in 2015, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO) adopted a number of fishing opportunities for 2016 of certain stocks in Subareas 1-4 of the NAFO Convention Area. Those measures should be implemented in the law of the Union.
- (34) Certain international measures which create or restrict fishing opportunities for the Union are adopted by the relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) at the end of the year and become applicable before the entry into force of this Regulation. It is therefore necessary for the provisions that implement such measures in the law of the Union to apply retroactively. In particular, since the fishing season in

CCAMLR Convention Area runs from 1 December to 30 November, and thus certain fishing opportunities or prohibitions in the CCAMLR Convention Area are laid down for a period of time starting from 1 December 2015, it is appropriate that the relevant provisions of this Regulation apply from that date. Such retroactive application does not prejudice the principle of legitimate expectations as CCAMLR members are forbidden to fish in the CCAMLR Convention Area without authorisation.

- (35) In accordance with the declaration by the Union addressed to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the granting of fishing opportunities in EU waters to fishing vessels flying the flag of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the exclusive economic zone off the coast of French Guiana⁽¹⁵⁾, it is necessary to fix the fishing opportunities for snapper available to Venezuela in Union waters.
- (36) Each year since 2011 Portugal has determined the TAC for the stock of whiting in ICES subareas IX and X and Union waters of CECAF 34.1.1, pursuant to relevant Regulations fixing the annual fishing opportunities. Portugal has indicated that the species caught in that area is pollack and not whiting, and ICES has confirmed that whiting is indeed rare in the area concerned. Therefore, no TAC for whiting needs to be set for this area.
- (37) Scientific advice received from the STECF indicates that it is in line with the precautionary principle to allow a small by-catch quota for undulate ray (*Raja undulata*) in ICES subarea IX.
- (38) In order to ensure uniform conditions for granting an individual Member State an authorisation to benefit from the system of managing its fishing effort allocations in accordance with a kilowatt days system, implementing powers should be conferred on the Commission. Those powers should be exercised in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁶⁾.
- (39) In order to ensure uniform conditions for the implementation of this Regulation, implementing powers should be conferred on the Commission relating to the granting of additional days at sea for permanent cessation of fishing activities and for enhanced scientific observer coverage as well as to establish the formats of spreadsheet for the collection and transmission of information concerning transfer of days at sea between fishing vessels flying the flag of a Member State.
- (40) In order to avoid the interruption of fishing activities and to ensure the livelihood of the fishermen of the Union, this Regulation should apply from 1 January 2016, except for the provisions concerning fishing effort limits, which should apply from 1 February 2016, and certain provisions in particular regions, which should have a specific date of application. For reasons of urgency, this Regulation should enter into force immediately after its publication.
- (41) Fishing opportunities should be used in full compliance with the applicable law of the Union.
- (42) According to Article 3(1) of Council Regulation (EC) No 847/96, when more than 75 % of a precautionary TAC has been utilized before 31 October of the year of its application, a Member State with a quota may request an increase in the TAC. The Commission has received a request for a 10 % increase of the 2015 TAC for skates and rays in the Eastern

- Channel (ICES division VIId). The supporting biological information, submitted with the request, has been verified and validated by experts at the Commission's Joint Research Centre.
- (43) Council Regulation (EU) 2015/104⁽¹⁷⁾ should therefore be amended accordingly.
- (44) The TAC for skates and rays in the Eastern Channel (ICES division VIId) provided for in Regulation (EU) 2015/104 applies from 1 January 2015. The amending provisions set out in this Regulation should also apply from that date. Such retroactive application does not prejudice the principles of legal certainty and protection of legitimate expectations as the fishing opportunities concerned are increased compared to the opportunities established in Regulation (EU) 2015/104,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

- (1) Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC (OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22).
- (2) Council Regulation (EC) No 509/2007 of 7 May 2007 establishing a multi-annual plan for the sustainable exploitation of the stock of sole in the Western Channel (OJ L 122, 11.5.2007, p. 7).
- (3) Council Regulation (EC) No 676/2007 of 11 June 2007 establishing a multiannual plan for fisheries exploiting stocks of plaice and sole in the North Sea (OJ L 157, 19.6.2007, p. 1).
- (4) Council Regulation (EC) No 1342/2008 of 18 December 2008 establishing a long-term plan for cod stocks and the fisheries exploiting those stocks and repealing Regulation (EC) No 423/2004 (OJ L 348, 24.12.2008, p. 20).
- (5) Council Regulation (EC) No 302/2009 of 6 April 2009 concerning a multiannual recovery plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, amending Regulation (EC) No 43/2009 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1559/2007 (OJ L 96, 15.4.2009, p. 1).
- (6) Council Regulation (EC) No 2166/2005 of 20 December 2005 establishing measures for the recovery of the Southern hake and Norway lobster stocks in the Cantabrian Sea and Western Iberian peninsula and amending Regulation (EC) No 850/98 for the conservation of fishery resources through technical measures for the protection of juveniles of marine organisms (OJ L 345, 28.12.2005, p. 5).
- (7) Council Regulation (EC) No 1300/2008 of 18 December 2008 establishing a multi-annual plan for the stock of herring distributed to the west of Scotland and the fisheries exploiting that stock (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 6).
- (8) Council Regulation (EC) No 847/96 of 6 May 1996 introducing additional conditions for year-to-year management of TACs and quotas (OJ L 115, 9.5.1996, p. 3).
- (9) Council Regulation (EC) No 754/2009 of 27 July 2009 excluding certain groups of vessels from the fishing effort regime laid down in Chapter III of Regulation (EC) No 1342/2008 (OJ L 214, 19.8.2009, p. 16).
- (10) Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy, amending Regulations (EC) No 847/96, (EC) No 2371/2002, (EC) No 811/2004, (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 2115/2005, (EC) No 2166/2005, (EC) No 388/2006, (EC) No 509/2007, (EC) No 676/2007, (EC) No 1098/2007, (EC) No 1300/2008, (EC) No 1342/2008 and repealing Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1627/94 and (EC) No 1966/2006 (OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1).
- (11) Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (OJ L 281, 23.11.1995, p. 31).
- (12) Agreement on fisheries between the European Economic Community and the Kingdom of Norway (OJ L 226, 29.8.1980, p. 48).
- (13) Agreement on fisheries between the European Economic Community, of the one part, and the Government of Denmark and the Home Government of the Faeroe Islands, of the other part (OJ L 226, 29.8.1980, p. 12).
- (14) Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community on the one hand, and the Government of Denmark and the Home Rule Government of Greenland, on the other hand (OJ L 172, 30.6.2007, p. 4) and Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in that Agreement (OJ L 293, 23.10.2012, p. 5).
- (15) OJ L 6, 10.1.2012, p. 9.
- (16) Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 laying down the rules and general principles concerning mechanisms for control by Member States of the Commission's exercise of implementing powers (OJ L 55, 28.2.2011, p. 13).
- (17) Council Regulation (EU) 2015/104 of 19 January 2015 fixing for 2015 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union vessels, in certain non-Union waters, amending Regulation (EU) No 43/2014 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 779/2014 (OJ L 22, 28.1.2015, p. 1).

Changes to legislation:

There are outstanding changes not yet made to Council Regulation (EU) 2016/72. Any changes that have already been made to the legislation appear in the content and are referenced with annotations.

View outstanding changes

Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole legislation item and associated provisions

Annex IA Text replacement by EUR 2016/2285 Regulation